

News Bulletin

Washington Fish & Wildlife Office

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Service Seeks Public Comments on Draft Habitat Conservation Plan and Permit for Development in Thurston County, Washington

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is seeking public review and comment on a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) describing the potential effects of issuing a proposed Incidental Take Permit for construction and development activities in Thurston County, Washington.

The Applicants (Kaufman Real Estate, LLC, Kaufman Holdings, Inc., and Liberty Leasing and Construction, Inc.) developed a draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and applied for a 20 year Incidental Take Permit for 13 properties in Thurston County, Washington. This permit would provide coverage for unavoidable impacts to federally listed species that may occur incidental to otherwise lawful construction and development activities. Species covered in the plan include the endangered Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, the threatened streaked horned lark; and two threatened subspecies of the Mazama Pocket Gopher.

The Applicants' draft HCP identifies a variety of short- and long-term conservation measures intended to minimize or offset unavoidable impacts to listed species as a result of construction and development activities covered by the permit. Measures include dedication of two permanent conservation sites that could contribute to the recovery of the species. Funding will be provided by the Applicants to manage these sites.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that Federal agencies analyze and publicly disclose the social, economic, and environmental effects associated with major Federal actions. The Service created a draft EA to fulfill this requirement and is now making this document available for public review and comment. The Service is specifically interested in public input including information, views, and opinions on the proposed issuance of the requested permit.

To request further information or submit written comments, please use one of the following methods, and note that your information request or comments are in reference to the "Kaufman HCP/EA":

- *Internet:* Documents may be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/wafwo/> and written comments may be submitted through <http://www.regulations.gov/>.
- *In-Person Viewing or Pickup:* Documents will be available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, 510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite 102, Lacey, Washington 98503.
- *U.S. Mail:* U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, 510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite 102, Lacey, Washington 98503.

Written comments must be received on or before December 21, 2015.

To learn more about Incidental Take Permits and Habitat Conservation Plans, visit:

<http://www.fws.gov/ENDANGERED/permits/index.html>.

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